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SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE: INDIA'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Ref A: STATE 116939  
Ref B: NEW DELHI 844  
Ref C: NEW DELHI 1818

¶1. (U) This cable is in response to ref A and provides information on changes the Government of India has made over the last 12-18 months in preparation for negotiations of a post-2012 climate agreement.

¶2. (U) In March 2008, Prime Minister and Union Minister for Environment and Forests Manmohan Singh appointed Shyam Saran, India's previous Foreign Secretary and Special Envoy for the Indo-U.S. Nuclear Agreement, as the PM's Special Envoy for Climate Change (ref B). Saran is slated to serve as India's lead negotiator for all international climate negotiations including UNFCCC COP-14 in Poznan and COP-15 in Copenhagen.

¶3. (SBU) In June 2008, India released its National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) which articulates and provides direction for its priorities on climate change at the national level (ref C). The release of the NAPCC coincided with a restructuring of climate change portfolios within the GOI which will not be complete until December 2008 at the earliest. However, it is clear the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the PM's Council on Climate Change retain overall control of the issue both domestically and in terms of international negotiations. In addition, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) has been charged with playing a larger role in domestic policy formulation while the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the putative nodal agency for climate change, appears to have had its role reduced to implementing policies formed by the PMO and MoST. The role of the Ministry of External Affairs in international negotiations has remained unchanged and apart from Saran, no additional staff has been added to address the issue within the GOI.

¶4. (SBU) The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy does not produce energy, but it does promote development of wind, solar, mini-hydro power and other renewable sources, including by managing GOI subsidies for renewables. The Ministry of Coal, Ministry of Power, and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, remain responsible for policy related to production and consumption of fossil fuels, and oversee GOI-owned parastatal companies, including, for example the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) which burns a lot of coal to produce power. Other central government heavy industrial ministries and state-level power ministries also control companies that are major emitters of greenhouse gases. The Planning Commission is charged with overall energy sector policy and planning, including power production, which is predominately and increasingly based on coal-fired thermal power. (COMMENT: We expect these ministries charged with fuel and energy production to resist

any domestic or international pressure on India to limit their coal-fired thermal power expansion and growing carbon dioxide emissions. END COMMENT.

¶5. (SBU) India is expected to hold national elections before May ¶2009. If PM Singh's Congress party dominated coalition is returned to power, no significant changes to the current climate change bureaucracy are expected. In addition, India's policy of refusing to accept binding international commitments to reduce GHG emissions, beyond the current statement that its per capita GHG emissions will at no point exceed that of developed countries, is unlikely to change no matter the result of the 2009 elections.

¶6. (U) It does not appear the GOI has made a significant effort to bolster its representation in Washington in order to represent its views to either the executive or legislative branches of the USG. India has made its position clear on climate change through other fora however, specifically within the UNFCCC and the Major Economies Process.

¶7. (U) New Delhi ESTHOff regularly discusses climate change issues and the U.S. position with counterparts in various embassies in Delhi, usually on an informal basis. Indian NGOs, however, have requested formal meetings with ESTHOff specifically to discuss the U.S. position on climate change.

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